

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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**POLLUTED RUNOFF STRATEGY OF
 THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION
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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The mission of the California Coastal Commission is to provide for the balanced use of the coastal zone and to protect, restore, and enhance coastal and marine (“coastal”) resources for the continuing benefit of current and future generations. Polluted runoff (“nonpoint source pollution”) is a significant cause of harmful impacts to coastal waters and habitats, and thus impedes full achievement of the Commission’s objectives. In recent years, the Commission—in partnership with other public and private entities—has focused new attention on improving the management of polluted runoff that affects the coastal zone. This document outlines the Commission’s authorities to address polluted runoff and summarizes the Commission’s current Polluted Runoff Strategy.

The California Coastal Act mandates the protection and restoration of coastal waters pursuant to several sections of the Public Resources Code (see Table 1). The Commission certifies Local

Table 1. Coastal Act policies relevant to the control of polluted runoff

§	Coastal Act Policy
30012	Carry out a public education program to promote coastal conservation.
30230	Maintain, enhance, and where feasible restore marine resources.
30231	Maintain and, where feasible, restore biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries and lakes through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.
30232	Protect against the spillage of crude oil, gas, petroleum products, or hazardous wastes.
30233	Limit the alteration of wetlands, coastal waters, estuaries; provide for feasible mitigation measures to minimize adverse environmental effects.
30235	Phase out or upgrade where feasible existing marine structures causing water stagnation contributing to pollution problems and fish kills.
30236	Limit hydromodification of rivers and streams; channelizations, dams, other substantial alterations of rivers and streams shall incorporate best mitigation measures feasible.
30240	Protect environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHAs). Site and design new development in areas adjacent to ESHAs to prevent significant adverse impacts.
30243	Protect long-term productivity of soils and timberlands.
30250	Site and design new development so as to not have significant adverse impacts, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources.
30251	Minimize alteration of natural land forms.
30253	Assure that new development is stable, has structural integrity, and does not contribute significantly to erosion.
30705	Control impacts of dredging in specified port areas.

Coastal Programs (LCPs) and approves coastal development permits (CDPs), energy projects, and federal (federally-approved, funded or conducted) projects consistent with these policies. By doing so, the coastal program protects water quality through the management of development that generates runoff or creates spills. The Commission also has a history of implementing educational and technical assistance programs and coordinating with other agencies to address land use and development activities that may produce polluted runoff.

In addition, Section 6217 of the Coastal Zone Reauthorization Amendments of 1990 (CZARA) [16 U.S.C. § 1455b] requires California, through a partnership between its coastal management and water quality programs, to prepare and submit a Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program (CNPCP).¹ In the CNPCP, the State must (1) show how it will implement, through enforceable policies or mechanisms, specified management measures to control polluted runoff affecting the coastal zone, (2) identify "critical coastal areas" where additional management measures may be necessary,² (3) demonstrate how interagency coordination will be improved and assured; and (4) provide technical assistance to local governments and the public. The Commission and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) submitted California's CNPCP to the U.S. EPA and NOAA in September 1995 after more than three years of development.

THE COMMISSION'S CURRENT MANAGEMENT OF POLLUTED RUNOFF

Concurrent with the development of the State CNPCP, Commission staff undertook several efforts to enhance the coastal program's management of polluted runoff. The primary focus of this work was to make the Commission's current operations more effective in addressing land use activities that generate polluted runoff, including obtaining and applying new information on the subject. As part of this work, staff prepared an internal Polluted Runoff Strategy with the help of an internal task force and discussions with the Commission. The initial Strategy was approved by the Commission's Management Team and reviewed by Coastal Commissioners at a public hearing last year. This updated Strategy more fully articulates the Commission's role in addressing polluted runoff, adding detail to areas that were not fully described in the CNPCP as originally submitted. Many of the actions and programs contained in this Strategy obviously are expected to help to facilitate implementation of the CNPCP as well as to improve the coastal program's overall treatment of water quality-related issues.

¹ At the federal level, Section 6217 is administered jointly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

² Based on the SWRCB's designation of threatened and impaired waterbodies, California's CNPCP submittal identified 24 "Critical Coastal Areas" (the area adjacent to a coastal water which fails to meet water quality standards or protect designated beneficial uses after technology-based management measures have been generally applied to land uses responsible for the impairment). Critical Coastal Areas must receive more scrutiny through the application of additional management measures pursuant to CZARA Section 6217. The need for a CNPCP is reflected in the fact that SWRCB and RWQCBs have designated 105 waterbodies in the coastal zone [excluding waters within the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC)] as "threatened and impaired" by polluted runoff. (This number does not include the coastal waterbodies also impacted by polluted runoff that are being considered for listing as threatened and impaired, or for which insufficient information exists to make a designation.)

In implementing the Strategy, the Commission recognizes the need to use limited resources efficiently as well as to ensure actions are properly tailored to match the diversity of California's climate and land use activities. With climate ranging from rainforest in the north to desert in the south, somewhat different approaches may need to be used when managing polluted runoff in various regions of the State. Part of this strategy is to focus attention where water quality problems exist and where the coastal program can make a difference in correcting those problems. This involves being able to make informed decisions about the kinds of management practices that are appropriate for the location, and being able to forge strong partnerships with the agencies and individuals that must be involved in the implementation of those management practices.

The Strategy is comprised of five interrelated elements, each of which is described in detail below. The five elements are:

1. Planning and Regulatory Controls;
2. Interagency Coordination;
3. Technical Assistance, Outreach, and Education;
4. Watershed Planning; and
5. Funding

Element 1.0 Planning and Regulatory Controls

Goal: To enhance the planning and regulatory functions of the California Coastal Commission (CCC) and Local Coastal Programs in ways that will control or prevent polluted runoff.

Action Plan	Activities that the CCC is undertaking to achieve goal include:
<p>1.1 Improve CCC and local government staff abilities to address polluted runoff through planning and permitting processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The CCC's Non-Point Water Pollution Program (NWPP) staff wrote the <i>Procedural Guidance Manual: Addressing Polluted Runoff in the California Coastal Zone</i> (2nd. Edition, 1996) and distributed it to all CCC planning staff. Follow-up workshops on the Manual were held to train CCC staff on water quality and management issues. The Manual is designed as a technical assistance and educational tool for planners to use to address nonpoint source (NPS) pollution issues when reviewing development projects at both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review and permit application stages. The Manual includes (1) flowcharts for planners to follow to incorporate CZARA Section 6217(g) guidance management measures and recommended Best Management Practices (BMPs) into project proposals; (2) information on how to prepare and review erosion control plans, drainage plans, landscaping plans, etc.; (3) model policies and ordinances that can be incorporated into local government programs during Local Coastal Program (LCP) development and updates. ➤ One analyst in each CCC district office has been designated and trained as a "Water Quality Coordinator." Responsibilities include: coordinating water quality issues with local government and other agency staffs in the region; serving as in-house experts on BMPs and other runoff issues; and sharing information between other coordinators to ensure consistent statewide implementation of BMPs. ➤ Through a Model Urban Runoff Program (MURP) project and the use of the <i>Procedural Guidance Manual</i>, the NWPP staff (through the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program); is working with local governments to improve environmental review and address polluted runoff impacts in a more comprehensive manner (e.g., one goal of the MURP is to prepare proposed changes to the CEQA Guidelines Environmental Checklist). <p><u>Future steps include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct, in coordination with Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and other agency staffs, at least 3 local government workshops, designed in part to introduce the <i>Procedural Guidance Manual</i> and other tools that will help local government planners in the coastal zone respond to polluted runoff issues and concerns. ➤ Develop mechanisms to monitor and document the effectiveness of measures applied through coastal program efforts.

Action Plan	Activities that the CCC is undertaking to achieve goal include:
<p>1.2 Conduct long-term outreach to local governments to facilitate changes in LCPs and other CCMP-implementing processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The NWPP staff reviewed LCPs to identify “model” policies, ordinances, and administrative procedures that relate to the six categories of NPS pollution identified by the U.S. EPA (agriculture, forestry, urban development, marinas and recreational boating, hydromodification, and wetlands protection and restoration). ➤ Through a separate grant project, NWPP staff analyzed 16 LCPs adjacent to threatened and impaired waterbodies to determine if and to what extent the LCPs contain policies/ordinances that are equivalent to the CZARA Section 6217(g) guidance management measures. ➤ NWPP staff also developed a model framework for assessing cumulative impacts of development in the context of polluted runoff. This framework (1) describes land use and land cover changes and water quality trends in a pilot coastal watershed; (2) assesses LCP policies and coastal permit data collected on past, present, and projected land uses; and (3) correlates these data with water quality information for the watershed. Model LCP language developed to address polluted runoff and cumulative impacts in the pilot watershed will also serve to provide model language for LCPs statewide. <p><u>Future steps include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify and assess “gaps” in LCPs (LCPs that do not contain policies/implementing ordinances that adequately address management measures and/or BMPs to control polluted runoff) and pursue improvements through LCP amendments and other avenues; ➤ Coordinate with the CCC's Regional Periodic Review process (a review of the coastal program's performance in different regions of the State) and develop a process to incorporate model polluted-runoff-control policies and ordinances into existing and new LCPs.

Element 2.0 Interagency Coordination

Goal: To improve the effectiveness of polluted-runoff management through increased interagency coordination

Action Plan	Activities that the CCC is undertaking to achieve goal include:
2.1 Ensure effective development and implementation of the Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program (CNPCP) ³	<p>➤ The CCC has completed one of the primary objectives of CZARA by forging a new partnership with the State's principal water quality management agency (the SWRCB).</p> <p><u>Future steps include:</u></p> <p>➤ Ensure that effective coordination mechanisms are in place with the SWRCB to respond to the pending final conditions placed on California's CNPCP by the U.S. EPA/NOAA;</p> <p>➤ Develop jointly with the SWRCB a comprehensive CNPCP Implementation Strategy (this is an anticipated requirement of the conditional approval of the State CNPCP by the U.S. EPA/NOAA);</p> <p>➤ Promote long-term coordination mechanisms to ensure an ongoing partnership between the Commission and SWRCB to carry out the CNPCP, as well as to build bridges between local, state, and federal entities that share a role in implementing the CNPCP;</p> <p>➤ Participate in the SWRCB's Watershed Management Initiative and related taskforces as appropriate;</p> <p>➤ Maintain the CCC's Non-Point Water Pollution Program statewide, working with the SWRCB and other groups to enhance CCC and local agency effectiveness in addressing land use activities that generate polluted runoff.</p>
2.2 Increase coordination with the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs)	<p>➤ The CCC's NWPP staff has coordinated initial meetings between Commission and RWQCB managers that are designed to seek common issues and projects, and to discuss sharing and consolidating resources and information such as Storm Water Permits, LCPs/General Plans, CEQA/NEPA review, and watershed planning.</p> <p><u>Future steps include:</u></p> <p>➤ Hold cross-training workshops for CCC staff and RWQCB staff.</p> <p>➤ Develop stronger, long-term ties with the RWQCBs to put into place the efforts discussed above into everyday practices.</p> <p>➤ Conduct, in coordination with the RWQCBs and other agency staffs, at least 3 local government workshops before Fall 1997 to improve polluted runoff management (see Element 1.1).</p>

³ The CNPCP Implementation Strategy is also a critical element of the CCC's goal to enhance CCMP planning and regulatory functions (see Planning & Regulatory Controls, Element 1.0 of the Polluted Runoff Strategy).

Action Plan	Activities that the CCC is undertaking to achieve goal include:
2.3 Participate in Local, Regional, and Statewide Programs	<p>➤ The CCC has developed and/or participated in Local, Regional, and Statewide Programs, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) Water Quality Protection Program (WQPP); • the Santa Monica Bay and Morro Bay National Estuary Programs; • the Tijuana and Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve programs; • the Model Urban Runoff Program project for small (less than 100,000 population) cities and counties; • the SWRCB's Nonpoint Source Interagency Advisory Committee; • the State Storm Water Quality Task Force; • the development of management strategies for dredging projects (e.g., the Long-Term Management Strategy being devised for disposal of dredge materials from San Francisco Bay) which involve questions of water quality and habitat protection. <p>➤ The CCC has also developed a proposed framework to assist current environmental monitoring activities in the Monterey Bay area through a consolidation of existing monitoring programs and the design of a plan to obtain comprehensive and standardized data. The framework also intends to ensure that monitoring programs are responsive to resource management questions.</p> <p><u>Future steps include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue work on the projects listed above; ➤ Work with the MBNMS WQPP and other agencies to promote the implementation of the proposed monitoring framework in the Monterey Bay area, and to identify how it may serve as a model to further other regional monitoring efforts; ➤ Work with the MBNMS WQPP and other agencies (e.g., the Central Coast RWQCB and Natural Resources Conservation Service) to develop a plan to evaluate, and if feasible implement, the use of a streamlined permitting process for installation of agricultural BMPs in coastal watersheds (WQPP team leaders are looking to conduct a pilot project in the Central Coast that will evaluate the transferability of the streamlined process to other jurisdictions).

Element 3.0 Technical Assistance, Outreach, and Education

Goal: To enhance the effectiveness of state and federal agencies, local governments, and the public in controlling polluted runoff through technical assistance and educational outreach

Action Plan	Activities that the CCC is undertaking to achieve goal include:
<p>3.1 Improve environmental review and polluted-runoff management through use of mapping and other technologies</p>	<p>➤ The CCC is developing land cover/land use change analysis techniques and identifying tools to make land use information more accessible to analysts and planners at all levels of government. The tools are designed to help assess cumulative impacts, and to monitor concerns such as soil loss, wetland changes, and other impacts that may be associated with polluted-runoff impacts. Examples of CCC projects include the Central Coast CoastWatch Change Analysis Protocol Project (C-CAP) and the Watershed Analysis Tool for Environmental Review (WATER) project.</p> <p><u>Future steps include:</u></p> <p>➤ Establish a common base of information (e.g., compatible databases) for managing polluted runoff within a watershed, and ensure that the information developed is readily available to entities that can use it;</p> <p>➤ Transfer models developed in pilot watershed projects to other areas.</p>
<p>3.2 Assist in the development of public education programs and technical analysis tools to improve coastal water quality</p>	<p>➤ Through its participation in the California Clean Boating Network (CCBN), CCC NWPP staff conducted public outreach, developed a binder that includes exemplary education products that address pollutants associated with marina and boater activity, and distributed more than 300 copies of the binders to coastal marinas and interested groups who reproduced the contents for distribution to users of the marina environment. The CCBN is now coordinating its efforts with the MBNMS WQPP's work on managing marina and boating impacts.</p> <p>➤ CCC staff are undertaking other public education efforts including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Adopt-a-Beach program • the Save-Our-Seas curriculum; and • coordination with public education/outreach staff from the San Francisco Bay/Los Angeles-area NPDES Storm Water to reduce urban pollution from litter and improper disposal into storm drains <p><u>Future steps include:</u></p> <p>➤ Begin work on a project to address the proper disposal and/or recycling of "waste oil" at harbors and marinas (the primary objectives of this project are to provide statewide education and to facilitate the installation of services needed by California's boaters in San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco Bay in order to reduce emissions of oil and other pollutants associated with boating activities);</p> <p>➤ Evaluate the feasibility of developing, in coordination with the MBNMS WQPP, a special watershed module for the Adopt-a-Beach coastal clean-up activities in central California.</p>

Element 4.0 Watershed Planning

Goal: To continue and increase CCC involvement in watershed management and planning efforts

Action Plan	Activities that the CCC is undertaking to achieve goal include:
4.1 Continue CCC participation in watershed efforts Statewide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain participation in watershed management efforts (e.g., Tijuana River, Santa Monica Bay, Malibu Creek, Morro Bay, and Elkhorn Slough) <p><u>Future steps include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop, for each CCC District office and local governments and for inclusion in the <i>Procedural Guidance Manual</i>, "Water Quality Summaries" that provide critical information (e.g., water and habitat quality, land uses, etc.) for Critical Coastal Areas designated by the SWRCB pursuant to the CNPCP. ➤ Prioritize areas where CCC staff involvement in watershed efforts can make the biggest impact

Element 5.0 Funding

Goal: To seek long-term funding, as well as supplemental special grants, to enable the CCC to carry forward an effective polluted runoff management strategy as part of the statewide coastal program

Action Plan	Activities that the CCC is undertaking to achieve goal include:
5.1 Seek stable support of coastal water quality related efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Submit budget requests and justifications for State General Fund support of a water quality planner position at the CCC to enable the continuation of a systematic polluted runoff focus throughout coastal program activities.
5.2 Search out grant opportunities to supplement and advance the CCC Polluted Runoff Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue the identification of potential funding sources and develop appropriate grant proposals to support and expand the CCC's polluted runoff control activities.
5.3 Identify means to share resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coordinate to the maximum extent feasible with similar federal, State, and local efforts related to polluted runoff management.